

Dear judge,

I am writing this letter to you concerning my brother, Matthew. First, I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I acknowledge your job must be very stressful and at times downright trying, so I pray God gives you the strength, the wisdom and discernment not only for my brother but for all.

Our childhood was incredibly painful and has left us abandoned by our parents. I don't say this to invite you into some sort of pity party, but to better allow you to understand. We love our parents regardless of their insufficiencies, but we are deeply scarred by them. Our growing years were that of a feeling of starving, starving to be loved, starving to understand, double standards and starving to fit into an ever-changing mold our parents created. We were home-schooled and very much isolated from the rest of the world, which left us with many questions but nobody to answer them. We were given everything we needed to survive, but not to live. Matthew is the only boy in a family of 7. I always felt quite sad for my brother, as he was always alone. He often played football by himself, he was the quarterback, the receiver and even the crowd. Matthew used what he had, his imagination. My brother also had a head injury when he was a young boy falling from the loft of a barn onto a concrete slab. Our parents were advised to seek medical attention, they did not.

I see Matthew's soul. Matthew is compassionate, humble funny and a spiritual man, that has problems and needs help, like all of us. We share a painful past, but with God's help, we will turn broken into beautiful. Matthew has our love now, and through this healing process. And when God's timing is right, Matthew will come home.

Lastly, judge, I ask that you do all you can to keep my brother, my children's uncle close to home as possible. We are all the family each other has. Thanks again for your time.

Melissa (Matthew's sister)